

LOYOLA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

1974 Oyster Party

Chairman's report

As a financial venture, the 1974 version of the Annual Oyster Party held on October 25th last was an unmitigated disaster. This fact is amply attested by the attached statement of receipts and disbursements. As a social event, the Party was enjoyed by the small number of persons who attended but fell considerably short of the level of success obtained in previous years. Both problems can be directly related of course to the small number of participants. The attendance in 1974 was only 70 compared to 164 in 1971, 186 in 1972 and probably around 1975 in 1973.

Without claiming any expertise in the matter of post-mortems, I believe that the factors which contributed to the poor attendance were as follows:

1. Lack of sufficient and complete publicity in the Alumnus.

The only announcement made in the Alumnus was a small box which appeared in fine print in the issue of October 1974 and was buried among news items relating to individual alumni and alumnae. (See copy attached.) In addition to its lack of prominence, the announcement failed to mention the date of the Party.

Although special mailings were sent to past presidents, elected members of the Sports Hall of Fame, Warriors Club's members, the members of the Board and the entire Class of "54" and although adds were placed in various suburban newspapers, etc., these measures proved to be too little and too late. It appears in fact that in addition to substantial publicity in the Alumnus and other media, the use of personal contact on a broad basis would have been essential.

2. A change in the format of the Party respecting cost.

To meet spiralling food costs and in line with the suggestion of last year's Chairman, Gary Brown, it was decided to change from the "as much as you can eat" formula to a modified "pay as you go" arrangement. Instead of a fixed admission price entitling the participant to no drinks but unlimited oysters, the system adopted was to provide two beers or one hard drink and one dozen oysters for the price of admission and to charge for additional drinks and oysters substantially at cost. The purpose of changing to this new formula was to keep the basic admission cost to a reasonable level and to encourage the attendance of younger alumni on a limited entertainment budget.

The change in formula completely failed to achieve this purpose as the response from the younger alumni was less than ever. On the other hand, the "pay as you go" approach represented a complete departure from the traditional format of oyster parties in general and was apparently not accepted by many regular participants who failed to attend this year. Even among those attending, many were quite vocal in their criticism of the "pay as you go" formula".

3. Conflict with other oyster parties.

The Loyola Party had to compete last October with a major oyster party in the traditional format being held the same night at one of the large English speaking Catholic Parishes in Montreal. Many of the regular participants at the Loyola Party reportedly attended this competing event. Another large oyster party had been held in Montreal West Town Hall on the previous evening which no doubt also contributed to the poor attendance at Loyola.

4. Increasing disinterest in Association social activities.

This phenomenon can be readily observed in the failure of recent university graduates to join and participate in their alumni associations. In the case of Loyola Alumni, the problem is further compounded by the recent merger with Sir George Williams University. It will be noted in this regard that the 1974 Oyster Party was the first such party to be held under the Concordia regime.

Despite the failure of the 1974 edition, I do not think that the Loyola Alumni Annual Oyster Party should be discontinued. The event has too long and too successful a history to abandon it without a strong comeback attempt. I do feel however that better planning and preparation will be necessary in future years to prevent a recurrence of this year's disaster.

I suggest more specifically for the 1975 event:

- (a) A return to the traditional "all you can eat" formula despite the increased admission cost involved.

This appears as a "must" both to regain regular participants and to compete successfully with similar events. Judging from the last Annual Golf Tournament, the increased price of admission should not prove a major deterrent in any event.

- b) A substantial reduction in the number of oyster openers.

The "all you can eat" parties with which the Association must compete are generally on an "open your own" basis at the same time. This obviously has the advantage of limiting consumption (at least for the less talented) and reducing labor cost. Our Association should return to this formula and have one opener at most.

- (c) Increased use of alumni, alumnae and/or students to limit other labor costs.

The necessity for this measure is apparent on examining the attached statement of receipts and disbursements. Although requiring more planning and preparation, the Association could presumably set up its own bar, cut down on internal staff, etc.

- (d) Use of some entertainment feature.

A sports movie, a talk by a sports personality, a comedy act or some other form of entertainment would be useful as an additional drawing card. The entertainment should be relatively brief however and would have to be obtained at a nominal cost.

- (e) Advance sale of admission tickets.

One of the principal reasons for the size of the "74" party deficit was the lack of a firm plan for the advance sale of tickets to the bulk of expected participants. We relied instead, as has reportedly been the custom for the oyster party, on selling tickets at the entrance. Having ordered food and service for 200 persons in advance, it was too late to adjust these orders when actual attendance turned out to be only 70.

To avoid a recurrence of this problem, I suggest that tickets be sold in advance and that the event be planned strictly on the basis of such advance sales. To achieve this end, I further suggest that tickets sold in advance be priced substantially below a (theoretically) limited number of tickets available at the entrance and that this price differential be extensively publicized.

I thank the members of my Committee, namely Gary Brown, Bob Bourgault, Christina Murphy and Richard Stock for their help and assistance in organizing and running the 1974 Oyster Party. If our joint endeavours were not met with success, it was not due to lack of effort or goodwill on their part.

Richard J. Riendeau
1974 Chairman

1974 Oyster PartyStatement of Receipts and DisbursementsReceipts

Admission tickets		
- advance sales	34 X \$6.00	\$ 204.00
- at entrance	38 X \$6.00	<u>\$ 228.00</u>
		\$ 432.00
Tickets for additional beer and liquor		
189 X \$0.50		\$ 94.50
Tickets for additional oysters		
44 X \$1.00 (per half dozen)		\$ 44.00
Sale of bagged oysters		
49 dozen X \$1.50		\$ 73.50
Sale of oyster knives		
2 X \$0.50		<u>\$ 1.00</u>
		\$ 645.00

Disbursements

Oysters (5 cases) and other food and supplies	
- Desjardins Sea Foods Reg'd	\$ 634.99
Oyster openers (4), supervisor (1) and trucking	
- Desjardins Sea Foods Reg'd	\$ 190.00
Liquor used (total invoice \$53.15)	
- Schenley	\$ 25.00
Beer	
- Queen Mary Provisions	\$ 64.75
Soft drinks, ice and rental of glasses	
- Frank's Rental Service	\$ 59.80
Bartenders (2) and busboy (1)	
- Schenley	\$ 52.90
Internal staff - admissions and ticket sales (Mr. J.A. Leblanc, 2 assistants and 1 student)	\$ 79.00
Gratuity	\$ 5.00
Printing of admission tickets	\$ 53.22
Liquor licence	\$ 20.00
Amusement tax	
70 X \$0.60	\$ 42.00
Rental of P.A. system	
- Concordia	\$ 31.00
Kitchen service	
- Beaver Foods	\$ 40.00
Maintenance	
- Concordia	<u>\$ 31.36</u>
	\$1,329.02

Deficit

\$ 684.02

NOTES

1. Actual attendance was 70 by reference to total ticket sales of 72.
2. On the purchase of an admission ticket, each participant was entitled to one dozen oysters and two beer or one hard drink on a "complimentary" basis. Additional oysters were sold at \$1.00 per half dozen, liquor at \$1.00 per one and a half ounce drink and beer at \$0.50 per bottle.
3. The cost of oysters, liquor and beer was as follows:

Oysters	\$1.81 per dozen
Beer	23.4¢ per bottle
Liquor	41.3¢ per one and a half ounces
4. Because of the small number of participants, one case of oysters purchased prebagged and most of the last case to be opened had to be sold at \$1.50 per dozen representing a loss of \$0.31 per dozen.
5. As of the date of this statement, an amount of \$12.00 included in the advance sales shown is receivable from a director.